

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3211

January 30, 2019

Acting Secretary David Bernhardt
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Acting Secretary Bernhardt,

I am writing to urge you to authorize the National Park Service to grant an easement to federal lands within the Gateway National Recreation Area for state and local governments to construct flooding and shoreline erosion prevention projects. This authorization would allow for the Army Corps of Engineers to finally begin construction on the East Shore Seawall, a project that is desperately needed to protect thousands of families in my district from the threat of future flooding and hurricanes. The funding and planning necessary for constructing the Seawall has already been secured, all that remains is for state and local governments to be granted access to the federal lands needed for the project.

Hurricane Sandy made landfall in the US on October 29, 2012, killing 147 people and causing over \$71 billion in damages. Since Sandy, Staten Island and many communities on the Atlantic seaboard have lived in fear the next hurricane, while struggling to recover from the last. Staten Islanders continue to struggle with coastal flooding, and some have yet to rebuild and return to their homes destroyed over 6 years ago. Similar disasters have impacted communities across our country. The message is clear—climate change is real, and we can only expect larger and more frequent storms in the future. For families impacted by Sandy and other disasters, the question isn't *whether* the next storm will hit, it's *when*.

In response to the need to prevent flooding and anticipate future disasters, federal, state, and local governments have worked together to plan and fund the construction of the Seawall- a series of levees, gates, and barriers that will shield Staten Island and surrounding areas from future disasters. Furthermore, construction of a seawall would relieve 9,100 households from the financial burden of having to purchase flood insurance due to the new protections.

Granting an easement to Gateway National Recreation Area will remove the final roadblock to the constructing the Seawall, which will in turn bring immediate peace of mind to the thousands of families living on Staten Island's East Shore. Now more than ever, the American people deserve to see government officials working together to protect them.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact my office at 202-225-3371 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Max Rose
Member of Congress